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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
**INFORMATION REPORT**

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 THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.  
 (FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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ARMY review completed.

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

x#	ARMY	x#	NAVY	x#	AIR	x#	FBI	#	AEC			
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REPORT 

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COUNTRY USSR

DATE DISTR. 28 Feb. 1955

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Dependents

1. In Lenkoran' (N 38-45, E 48-50), most of the married officers of the 44th Border Guard Otryad rented their quarters and paid for these themselves. They were allowed to have all their dependents, i.e., wives, children, mother, etc. live with them. Married officers who served with komendaturay or zastavy were allowed to have only their wives and children live with them. All married officers at the komendatura and at the zastava had their wives and children with them, but, normally, the policy was to send only single officers to serve with zastavy. When officers lived with their dependents, they could draw the food supplies from the border guard troops but had to prepare their meals at home. Conscripted sergeants and soldiers were not allowed to marry; however, re-enlistees (sverkhsrochniki) were.

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Leisure Time

2.  In Lenkoran', border guard troops, other than trainees, who received 24-hour passes, could only spend about four hours of the 24-hour period in town. The rest of the time, soldiers were required to remain in the area of the 44th Border Guard Otryad.
3. At the zastavy, EM were entitled to two 24-hour passes a month. However, they were normally not allowed to go to nearby villages for the purpose of shopping, etc. Instead, they had to remain within 200 to 300 m of the zastava area. When they wanted to go farther than that distance, they had to get permission from the zastava CO and were required to go in armed groups of two or three. Normally,

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border guard troops were not free for more than one half to two hours a day. Officers could go freely wherever they wanted.

4. Only officers and re-enlistees were allowed to have civilian clothes in their possession. Officers and re-enlistees could wear civilian clothes off-duty but they only took advantage of this privilege in Lenkoran', never at the komendatura or the zastava. All restrictions and regulations with regard to visiting nearby settlements were strictly complied with because of fear of punishment. In addition, it took six hours to get from zastava headquarters to the nearest village and back and all border guard troops had been told by officers that, for a 24-hour unauthorized absence, troops could and would be sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment.

#### Leave and Pass Policies

5. In the border guard troops, regulations did not provide for any leave for conscripts during their three years of conscripted service. However, on rare occasions, selected border guard troops received ten-day leaves for meritorious service, e.g., for catching illegal border crossers. In such instances, EM usually had a choice between a medal or a ten-day leave. Invariably, EM chose leave in preference to a medal. [ ] one EM who had caught three border crossers. For the first, he was awarded a medal, for the second he received a bonus of 75 rubles, and for the third he received a ten-day leave. [ ] border guard officers received one month's leave a year and that re-enlistees received from two weeks to one month; all leaves were exclusive of travel time. [ ] they could go wherever they wanted in the USSR while on their leave.

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6. [ ] not more than four men could be away on a 24-hour pass at one time. [ ]

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[ ] border guard regulations provided for this leave and the troops were told about it. Compassionate leave could be granted in cases of severe illness or death in the family but only if a written affidavit was signed by a doctor and endorsed and verified by the Military Registration Board (Voyenkomat). On receipt of this document, the zastava CO was required to request compassionate leave for the EM in question through channels from the otryad; only the detachment CO could grant such leave. The soldiers did not complain about the leave policy because a soldier was not supposed to complain about such things in the USSR for fear of being labelled an "enemy of the nation".

#### Discipline and the Prevention of Drunkenness and VD

7. Discipline within the zastava was generally good and orders were carried out; however, during basic training, [ ] discipline was [ ] severe. [ ] it could no longer be called discipline but rather "derisive or degrading treatment" (izdevatelstvo). Trainees, for instance, were not allowed to go to the latrine without the sergeant's permission and often had to undress within 30 seconds or be subjected to extra training.
8. [ ] there was no guardhouse; however, the komendatura had one. [ ] no members of [ ] unit were held in the komendatura guardhouse. During [ ] service with the border guard troops, [ ] only remembered one case of disciplinary action in which a [ ] border guard soldier was involved. During the last days of border guard basic training in Lenkoran' with the 44th Border Guard Otryad, one

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trainee was sentenced to three days of hard labor for disobeying his sergeant, the assistant squad leader of his training squad.

9. [ ] never noticed any instances of drunkenness. When officers or EM drank in Lenkoran', they kept it under control so that it was not noticeable. At the zastava or at the komendatura, vodka was not very easily obtainable. [ ]

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#### Causes of Dissatisfaction

10. [ ] the majority of border guard troops were dissatisfied with the conditions under which they served, such as long hours, poor food, work overload, lack of free time, etc. [ ]

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11.

#### Demobilization Before the End of Normal Duty Tour

12. Out of [ ] 260 inductees who reported for basic training in Lenkoran', about 15 to 20 were sent home a few days after their arrival. Some of the soldiers who were sent home claimed they were being sent because of physical disability. They were escorted by border guard troops to the Lenkoran' railroad station, but [ ] did not know what happened after their arrival there.

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#### Propaganda Against Desertion

13. Border guard EM were repeatedly told, primarily by political officers, that desertion was tantamount to spying and that the offense would be punished by death before a firing squad or by a sentence of 25 years hard labor.

#### Fraternization

14. [ ] on the USSR-Iran border, fraternization presented no particular problem for the Soviet authorities. The local population, of the Moslem faith, was not interested in fraternizing with Soviet troops. Fraternization with the local population was generally forbidden to border guard troops, although they were allowed to buy produce from local peddlers who visited the zastava regularly. Even the few border guard EM of Azerbaydzhan origin who served in the zastava did not fraternize with the local population.<sup>1</sup>

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#### Relationship and Division of Power Between COs and Political Officers

15. Outwardly and in front of the troops, relations between commanders and political officers were good. [ ]  
[ ] political officers were completely independent from commanding officers or other line officers.<sup>2</sup>

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#### Measures to Prevent Desertion

16. [ ] rarely heard the subject of desertion mentioned; at the border guard zastava, it was never mentioned at all. [ ]  
[ ] the main and the best means of preventing desertion in the border guard troops were the existing and universally-known regulations provided for the punishment of deserters, i.e., death or 25 years imprisonment. [ ]

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Friction Between Troops from Different Parts of the USSR

17. [redacted] in the USSR, the majority of infantry troops were recruited from other Soviet republics. While in Lenkoran', [redacted] among the infantry troops stationed in Lenkoran', there were several fights between soldiers of Russian origin, who were in the minority, and those who came from other parts of the USSR, mostly from Caucasian tribes or nationalities. Apparently, the fights were frequent and violent.

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Food Inadequacies<sup>3</sup>

18. [redacted] the Chief Political Officer of the 44th Border Guard Otryad, a lieutenant colonel [redacted] made a staff or inspection visit to [redacted] the 11th Border Guard Zastava. The political officer remained at the zastava about 36 hours and spent the night there. He conducted a thorough inspection and, at one point, gathered some of the border guard troops who were not on duty at that particular time and asked them various questions about service conditions. The soldiers complained about the poor preparation of the food and about the fact that the spring water, which was the only source of drinking water at the zastava, became very muddy and dirty when it rained. The inspecting officer reprimanded the "Deputy for Line Matters" of the 11th Zastava, a young lieutenant who had recently finished an unidentified OCS, and then went in the 11th Border Guard Zastava compound with the lieutenant and a first sergeant, to point out deficiencies to them. [redacted] this inspection visit bore definite results. One of the two cooks, who was from Azerbaydzhan, was replaced. This resulted in cleaner and better food. The soldiers themselves did the necessary work to obtain clearer spring water by channelling the water over stones, etc. The entire zastava was spruced up and looked much cleaner. On the other hand, the lieutenant who was the Deputy for Line Matters, who had been thus reprimanded, resented the fact that the soldiers had complained and became stricter and more exacting towards the border guard troops. He increased the details and the work. The zastava EM, however, retaliated by circulating rumors to the effect that, at the time of the forthcoming bi-annual command inspection, which was to take place in the spring of 1953, they would make a poor showing; this, of course, would be a black mark against the lieutenant's record and might lead to his transfer or other punishment. Generally, the EM were rather happy that the inspecting officer had reprimanded the lieutenant.

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1. [redacted] Comment: This area of Azerbaydzhan is rugged and sparsely settled territory. The only populated places were small, widely-separated hamlets.

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2. [redacted] Comment: [redacted]

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[redacted] the political officer was, of course, subordinate to other line officers. Furthermore, at the border guard zastava, the political officer occasionally performed the duties of acting zastava CO when the latter was away on business.

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[REDACTED]

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This in itself implies that the political officer was subordinate to the CO, at least in theory, a fact which was also implied by the political officer's official title of 'Deputy CO for Political Matters' (Zamestitelnachalnika po politichasti). However, in spite of all the aforementioned facts, [REDACTED] the political officer was independent and not really subordinate to the CO because, at least at the zastava, he was of equal rank and because [REDACTED] had never witnessed the CO actually issuing an order to the political officer.

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[REDACTED]

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